



The Holy See

MASS FOR THE PILGRIMS FROM IRELAND

HOMILY OF JOHN PAUL II

Vatican Gardens

Vendredi, 23 April 1982

Dear brothers and sisters from Ireland,

Last Wednesday I had the joy of welcoming the Garda Sochána na hireann at the General Audience. This gave me the opportunity to reiterate my gratitude to you and to encourage you in your Christian lives. And today we have the occasion to be together once again as you advance on your pilgrimage of faith. We are together with our Blessed Mother Mary, at her shrine in the Vatican, asking her to lead us to Jesus and to assemble us around the person of her Son, who is our Lord and Saviour.

1. Indeed, we are experiencing this morning the reality of the scene depicted for us in the Gospel.

Gathered like the disciples on the hillside by the Sea of Galilee, we have Jesus in our midst. He is the centre of our assembly, the centre of our very lives. Like the disciples we know that we are the object of his care and concern. He is the Good Shepherd who loves us deeply and tenderly. We have come to listen to him, to watch him as he gives thanks to his Father; we have come in order to share in his great act of thanksgiving. We have come so that we too, like the disciples, can be nourished by his word and by the bread that he offers us for eternal life. Each of us has come to this Eucharistic assembly, filled with the sentiments that the psalmist expresses this morning: "I am sure I shall see the Lord's goodness in the land of the living".

2. Being all together, with Mary, in the company of Jesus, gives us a deep joy and a wonderful reassurance. We are prompted by the Holy Spirit to give voice to our trust and confidence and to our hope in Jesus Christ, the Son of God and Son of Mary: "The Lord is my light and my help;

whom shall I fear? The Lord is the stronghold of my life...”.

The presence of Christ fortifies and sustains us. Jesus is with us as he was with the Apostles in all the hardships that they encountered in bearing witness on this name. And just as the Apostles experienced many difficulties for speaking in the name of Jesus, we too shall come to understand ever more that authentic Christian living demands constant effort. There are obstacles of many kinds, but God is in us with his grace, ever urging us to fidelity, ever inviting us to live in accordance with the message we have received.

3. In imitation of the Apostles, we must continue to proclaim, by word and action, the Good News of the Paschal Mystery. The Good News of new life in Christ, of Easter peace and reconciliation, has been entrusted to all of us. It must be lived and proclaimed not only in the public temples of our churches but also in every private house, in every “domestic church”, which is the home. The Good News of Christ’s Resurrection must be lived and proclaimed in every home in Ireland.

In the Acts of the Apostles we are told finally that the “proclamation of the Good News of Christ Jesus was never interrupted”. Yes, the Good News must never be interrupted, as long as our earthly pilgrimage continues. With God’s help, remain for ever united among yourselves, with Christ in your midst. And be always guardians of the Good News, guardians of Christ’s peace. Amen.

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